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THOREAU AND JOHN HARGRAVE, ENGLISH FOUNDER OF THE KIBBO KIFT, by Lonnie L. Willis

The oddest example of vacillation toward Thoreau may have been John Hargrave, the eccentric founder of the Woodcraft Kindred, or Kibbo Kift, and the leader of England's Social Credit movement. Even though Thoreau's ideas habitually emerged in Hargrave's writings, his position on them fluctuated. The singularity of his variable attitude proceeds from the fact that Hargrave seems to have been a natural candidate for Thoreau's beliefs about nature and society.

John Hargrave (1894-1982) claimed that in childhood he was an English "Mowgli," whose friends were birds and animals of the Westmorland dales. "Whatever understanding of human nature I possess," he said, "has come to me direct from non-human Nature" ("Animals"). Before the Great War, his quest for "the right conduct of life" and his wish to become a naturalist led him to the Boy Scout Movement, which he soon deserted because of its militarism (Ranson 451). When the War came, he served on the Gallipoli Peninsula, being a stretcher-bearer during the disastrous landing at Suvla Bay. That calamity convinced Hargrave that when peace returned he would set up an anti-militarist camping organization for young men.

Even before the war, the young Hargrave had published a practical guide to the outdoors, Lonecraft (1913), to serve isolated Scouts. His new organization, founded in 1920, was the Kibbo Kift Kindred, an outdoor venture with a mystical turn toward ancient cultures. Its members, both men and women, uniformed themselves in shorts, hooded jerkins, and cloaks. The Kindred's tribal-like structure, its woodland rituals, and its back-to-Nature ideals were set forth and lovingly illustrated by Hargrave in various publications.

The Great War Brings It Home (1919) makes salient, positive use of Thoreau, indirectly and directly. The book's thesis is that civilization has arrived at an unnatural stage. The English people's discontent, manifested in continual "labour unrest," and their search for a "simpler way of living" are symptoms of this stage of civilization, caused by loss of contact with Nature. "To forsake Nature is to forsake one's birthright" (7). The solution for this condition is to "forsake our own fireside" and return to the woods.

Thoreau is cited as a leading example. "In 1845 Henry David Thoreau borrowed an axe and built a shanty for himself in the woods (in the U.S.A.). He went there, he said, for seclusion and solitude that he might the better study Nature and become acquainted with himself. While in the woods he demonstrated that a man can support himself on less than $100 per year and have two-thirds of his time to himself" (21). Hargrave then gives his reader a page or so of exemplary quotations from Walden, or Life in the Woods, including the "I went into the woods because I wished to live deliberately" passage.

Hargrave indicates that Thoreau is well known; "his books are classics" (23). Modern man is a "pygmy" race; yet Thoreau described the right use of Nature. However, he admits, the mention of Thoreau will cause some people to inquire, "But wouldn't it be terrible to revert to a state of barbarism?" Hargrave, though, argues that "cultivated acquirement" is transitory anyway, and life "is more than raiment:" The industrial revolution, which society has exalted, reached its climax, he says ironically, in the Great Exhibition of 1851 while "Thoreau was digging his bean-patch and living a purely natural life without any of these accessories" (25). Not only was Thoreau as much at home in the wilds as a "Red Indian," he was beyond other students in intellectual attainments, while showing the way toward a return to the primitive life.

Even in this encomium to Thoreau, however, there appears a hint of Hargrave's tendency to waffle. As he cites the "hundreds and hundreds of people" who long for a natural life, he begins to resemble a spokesman for a movement; he is anxious that Thoreau's solution will be seen as a retreat from society. "But so out-and-out an example as Thoreau's has perhaps done more to frighten people off than to persuade them to follow. To follow him would mean to give up everything--to give up the world actually instead of only by our sponsors in our baptism. But if Thoreau retreated from the world and became a voice crying in the wilderness, we must remember that the forerunner had no choice. There were none to go with him. He stood alone. For no one believed in his gospel" (25). To Thoreau's John the Baptist, Hargrave becomes a Christ figure; at any rate, he proposes no "running away from society," only "pitching our social camp in a more natural environment."

Nevertheless, Hargrave prescribes that each Camp Chief in his movement must read Walden (275).

With its motto, "the proper function of the individual is to live splendidly," the Kibbo Kift evolved by the mid-20's into both

Nature enthusiasts and political devotees. In the summer of 1924, Hargrave and an assistant retired into the mountains of Wales for a fortnight; on their return, they proclaimed an economic theory based on the Social Credit system originated by C.H. Douglas (Osborne 60). In 1927 Hargrave published The Confession of the Kibbo Kift, a theoretical and economic analysis of the Kin. Though the book emphasizes the Kins' two distinct obligations," work and creative play, the obligation to work looms large. It is no surprise, then, to find Thoreau's ideas changing to meet new circumstances. Hargrave notes that the Kindred sprang from "a moribund Scout organization," a move initiated with difficulty. Thus, it "was hoped that this would lead to something which was no mere sentimental Thoreauism" (59). A tough Thoreauism, perhaps; but not mere nostalgia for the past. Emphasis on economic theory now takes over.

Three years earlier Hargrave's widely-read novel Harbottle had appeared; in that "modern pilgrim's progress" Hargrave satirized various social panaceas of his time, including the Thoreau-inspired Simplification movement. His protagonist Harbottle, bewildered by the deaths of his sons in the War, goes into the world with a rucksack on his back to search for contentment. He meets a variety of muddled persons, all convinced that they have found Truth. In his encounter with a man named Rumplemeyer, he is introduced to "Scientific simplification," which the man proposes as Harbottle's own reason for going about with a rucksack "close to nature" (156).

"Nothing of the sort," says Harbottle. "It was simply a desire to get away from people who bothered me, and to think things out." Rumplemeyer offers a suggestion that sounds more than a little like the philosophy of the Kibbo Kift: "Get back to Nature--break the chains of convention--live fully." However, Harbottle resents the implication that the current Simple Lifers are living in the steps of Primitive Man. "But you seem to think that Primitive Man was full of joy and gladness... and was a fine, well-built, healthy man; a sort of Sandow clad in skins, with the mind of a Thoreau," he charges.

Rumplemeyer persists, throwing Harbottle into an emotional tirade: "There was nothing simple about Primitive Man. Nothing. It is quite a modern idea--this Simplification.. I'm after Simplification...but I don't see it in nuts and sandals....You've tried to get things boiled down to the simple truth--and,and the fact is you've collected nothing to boil down. You've no bones, so to speak,...Simplicity! you say--and the very word itself hypnotizes you" (157). This passage yet reveals Hargrave's respect for the intellect of Thoreau, about whom he had said "no student had accumulated more intellectual knowledge from all sources" (Great War 25). But it was easy for Hargrave, man of many enterprises, to believe the Simple Lifers were merely lazy.

By 1930 the enterprising Hargrave had turned his energies to promoting C.H. Douglas' Social Credit movement, a complex system for reforming banking so as to create a debt free society. Described as "incomprehensible in those areas where it is not merely obscure" (Osborne 38), Social Credit for a time engaged people all along the political watchtower (including Ezra Pound). Thus, the Kibbo Kift became the Green Shirt Movement for Social Credit. Using an "unarmed military technique" (66), the Green Shirts marched, spread leaflets, organized protests, and denounced nearly everybody, especially bankers and politicians, right up to the 1937 law banning uniformed movements in England.

World War II left the Green Shirts in disarray; nevertheless, Hargrave remained active on the Social Credit front. With slogans like "Freedom to work at work worth doing!" he campaigned for the use of solar energy, for example, as a means of creating a society whose workers were free of health-destroying toil. The right use of The Machine would produce leisure for ordinary people. Now convinced that anyone who planned to "re-enslave us in a Primitive Peasant Routine is a fool" ("Machine"), Hargrave preached against those who would "abandon all forms of modern mechanism and take us to some kind of Thoreau-ism," making complete his distrust of the Simple Life.

Perhaps the last time Hargrave cited Thoreau in a "positive" fashion was, curiously, as the model retiree into a masculine world. In 1927, at about the time Hargrave was preparing to leave Nature for Economics, he published a novel, The Pfenniger Failing, which told of the tendency in the Pfenniger family for members to "go blarge"(i.e., become a muddle-headed Utopianist). Tony, the Pfenniger of the novel, has not only bewildered himself" with "resounding verbiage" from the likes of Plato, Emerson, Thoreau, and Tolstoy, but he has also come to think he should "Do Something" (93). The novel details Tony's attempts in life to succeed at "Something" until, sick of the world and its inhabitants, especially women, he seeks refuge in the Gunroom on his estate. "More and more," Tony realizes, "he was drawn to make the Verderer's Gunroom his refuge....He would slip away to smoke by himself in the gunroom. It was a man's room....There were no curtains. The floor was of bare oak boards. the table was scratched and rough and plain...." Then Tony recognizes the correlary of his safe place: "Thoreau; like this was a sort of'Walden'; a sort of sanctuary from the fetid atmosphere of womankind" (306)

For Hargrave, Thoreau remained a touchstone of the intellectual retreat from the modern world. He did lose faith, apparently, in some of the earlier ideas about Nature's remedy for the ills of society. Natural candidate that he was for Thoreau's philosophy, he seems nevertheless to have, quite ironically, "gone blarge."

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Boise State University

1-26-53

I DISCOVER THOREAU, by Joseph Fitzgibbon

For Ohio farmers who knew him, Harry Barnett was an oddity, an eccentric, a misplaced out-of-towner. An industrial accident had forced his early retirement, left his face scarred and cost him vision in one eye. But it had done little to deter his love for boat building, nor dampened his single-minded philosophy of life.

He told my mother that he was determined that his grandchildren should experience rural life. That he had never farmed before seemed a minor obstacle to him. Mother never argued. "What was the sense," she told me years later. "When Harry made up his mind to do something, it was done."

It seems hard to believe that thirty years have passed since we moved onto that 64-acre farm with Harry, because my memory of him is as sharp today as it was then. I remember clearly my twelfth summer in 1955 when he called me into a garage he had converted into his boat shed. The August air was sweet and rich with the smell of oak shavings and fiberglass. The dirt floor freckled with oil. It was a pleasing time. For summer time was our time. Harry's and mine. With school work out of the way, I could sit in the cool shadows reading or listening as he regaled me with his tall tales of the sea, Indian cures for snakebite, or fractured versions of Robert Louis Stevenson's Kidnapped, Once in awhile, he would look up from a plank he was planing or sanding to see if I was listening.

But, this particular August day, he stoped working. As he brushed the sawdust from his blacksmith arms, he walked back to his workbench drawer. When he returned, his calloused hands cradled two well-worn volumes: Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales and Thoreau's Walden. He handed them to me with the kind of look that only a grandfather can give to his grandson and said, "I think you are ready to read these yourself."

Harry is gone now, but I still have the books, a faded photograph of him posing Hemingway-like on his boat in the Gulf of Mexico and a life-time love for these American writers that sprang from that first encounter in Harry'a garage. Today, if I could wish anything for my students it would be that they have as positive experience with Hawthorne and Thoreau as I did.

But there's more.

High School and college brought a continued growth with and internalizing of the works of Hawthorne and Thoreau. I found that Hawthorne's short stories mixed well with my reading of Poe and Bierce and complemented my interest in Shelley, Keats and Bryon. I still remember the astonished expression on my senior high English teacher's face when I told her I really enjoyed The Scarlet Letter.

For many years, Emerson remained a bit aloof for me, inaccessible. But Thoreau; now here was a writer in my mind who lived what he believed and believed what he lived. For those of us who wrestled with our consciences over the nightmare of Vietnam, Thoreau provided solace. He often capped off a late night debate, and remained with us through our morning coffee, I remember well when Jesse Jackson and Dr. Martin Luther King rushed to Ohio to calm jangled nerves of a community racially split because of the prejudicial hiring practices of a major department store. Once again, Thoreau spoke and, perhaps, for the first time I really began to understand what he was saying.

After graduate school, I began teaching. Two years in a Hispanic junior high and four years in an alternative school in Portland, Oregon honed my teaching skills and taught me a great deal about patience.

As my life began to focus, I started to write--as much for myself as for publication. Publication did come, but much later. Meanwhile, I reread Walden, wrestled with Emerson, and feasted on Hawthorne. I took a job in a rural high school and then with a large suburban high school near Portland. It has been here that I see that my life has come full circle. As with my grandfather who told me thirty years ago that it was time to read Hawthorne and Thoreau, I now see that it is time for my students to really read these writers. Not just because they are great writers. Not just because they speak of a time when American was naive, spirited and filled with belief in its own unlimited destiny. But, because the works speak to the human conscience and imagination as much today as they did one-hundred years ago. Too, I think, they can offer a link perhaps a handhold to help adolescents move from their I-centered world to the world outside themselves.

"MR. ALCOTT ON THOREAU" [Reprinted from the Concord Freeman For Aug. 19, 1880 telling of an incident during a session of The Concord School of Philosophy]

In one of his lectures, Mr. [Denton] Snider's allusion to Thoreau, as a disorded genius who broke away from the contradictions of life and fled to the woods to reconcile them, brought Mr. Alcott to his feet with fresh facts about his friend Thoreau that are too good to be lost. "Thoreau," said Mr. Alcott, was an extreme individualist. He was named after old Thor, the Northman, who orginated the saying, 'I will find a way or cut one' and never lost the spirit of his great ancestor. He said to himself, 'I will be as independent of the human race as possible.' He had

prodigious common sense, no one more. He also had a high ideal and rare poetic gifts. He was more in sympathy with nature than with any human being. The animals knew him and selected him as their representative. He was a simple, natural man. In my family, when we had a visit from him, the word passed. 'Mr. Thoreau has come; we will all listen.' When he projected the Walden cabin he came to me and said 'Mr. Alcott, lend me an ax,' and with this he built the temple of a grand primeval man. Here, with Homer and the Bible, he lived a practical and ideal life. He annexed the universe to Concord," Then, turning to the custodian of Thoreau's MSS., Mr. H.G.O. Blake, who was in the room, Mr. Alcott said that Mr. Blake had spoken to him in this wise: "Well, really, the Bible is a good book, but Henry's ideas come so near I sometimes take a text from his writings and think of it all day." Then Mr. Alcott added; "Henry Thoreau was one grand man." All this was said with a glow and flash that thrilled the audience.

1-26-53

A FORGOTTEN OBITUARY OF THOREAU'S SISTER
[AN UNIDENTIFIED CLIPPING FOUND IN AN OLD SCRAPBOOK]

Another Friend of the Slave Gone. Died in Concord, on Thursday, June 14th, Miss Helen Thoreau, aged 36 years.

Our friend, Miss Thoreau, was an abolitionist. Endowed by nature with tender sensibilities, quick to feel for the woes of others, the cause of the slave met with a ready response in her heart. She had a mind of fine native powers, enlarged and matured by cultivation. She had the patience to investigate truth, the candor to acknowledge it when sufficient evidence was presented to her mind, and the moral courage to act in conformity with her convictions, however unpopular these convictions might be to the community around her. The cause of the slave did not come before her in its earliest beginnings; but as soon as it was presented, she set herself to inquire how it was, that a system which imbrutes man so cruelly, which tears asunder all the tenderest ties so ruthlessly, which puts out the life of the soul, by denying it the means of growth and progress so effectually, was supported. She saw the religious denominations with which she had been connected vehemently crying out against the Catholics for denying the Bible to the people, and yet one-sixth part of the people of the Protestant United States were legally deprived of the right to read God's word, nay worse than the Catholics, the right of learning to read. She assertained that the actual number of slaveholders in the land was not more than two hundred and fifty or three hundred thousand. How, she said, can these keep three millions of people in bondage? Why do not the slaves rise, as did our fathers in the revolution, and demand their rights at the point of the bayonet? She ascertained that the bayonets of the North were pledged to unite with those of the Southern tyrants, in case of any attempt at insurrection, and put down the poor crushed bondman, if, in his agony, he would strike down the oppressor. She saw that the nation had written in its Constitutuion the grievousness it had prescribed to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of the people, that widows might be its prey, and that it might rob the fatherless. This Constitution, every man, either by himself or his deputy, held up his hand to heaven, and swore, So help me God, I will sustain. She saw that in the same Constitution, they agreed, by the same solemn oath, if the poor victim of oppression should flee to any of the so-called free States, braving incredible dangers, facing death in its most terrible forms, to obtain deliverance from his oppressors, and appeal to Northern men for protection, being pursued by his enslaver, they must perjure themselves, or allow his being delivered up to his pursuers, and sent back again to the most cruel bondage, without lifting a finger in his defence - thus stifling the noblest feelings of their natures.

In despair, she turned to the church. Surely, she said, the church of Christ is free from these abominations. But she found the church made up of men from all the political parties, alike pledged to the support of the accused institution. In keeping with this, she saw the church, almost universaly, giving to the slaveholder or his abettor, the right hand of Christian fellowship - calling him dear brother in Christ. She saw the pulpits of the North open to Southern divines, while the advocates of the slave knocked in vain for admission at the door of almost every church in the land. She said to herself, Is this the church of Christ, and has it come down so low? She repudiated such a church. Immediately did she turn her back upon its communion, and if she went to the house of prayer, as she occasionally did, she went to see if the spirit of Christ and humanity might not be rising among them. Again and again has she called upon the writer of this notice, when returning from church, and said, with strong emotion, it is all darkness and gloom. It was not eloquent declamation which led her from the church' but it was the long array of strong, incontrovertible facts, which impelled her to the course she felt called upon to pursue, and she knew that the eloquence of anti-slavery owed its source to these same facts, and endowed with eloquence the most ungifted tongues. To her, as to many others, it was pleasant to go to the church on the Sabbath, and worship with her friends; and nothing but an entire conviction of its wrongfulness, in her case, could have prevented her constant attendance upon the institutions of religion. But the call to her was imperative - 'Come out of her, that ye be not partaken of her plagues,' and she obeyed, this obedience brought peace in health, and peace in sickness. Not an hour of gloom did she experience during her protracted illness. Though constitutionally timid, the gloom of death was all taken away, and the king of

terrors became to her an angel of hope and joy, opening her bright visions of beauty; to use her own expression. One day, in conversation, she expressed her gratitude for what anti-slavery had done for her, in opening new and juster views of God, and truth, and duty, and exclaimed - 'O how much has anti-slavery done for me, and how little have I done for it! I wanted health, that I might keep school, and in this way do something for the cause I so much love. but it is ordered otherwise!

She experienced in its fullest extent the fulfilment of the promise - 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord shall be with him upon his bed of languishing, and make all his bed in his sickness! Her long continued illness made the suffering virtues, patience and resignation,to shine brightly, and smoothed away the sharp edges of her character, fitting her, we doubt not, for a polished stone in the great temple above.

The abolitionists of Concord will mourn deeply her loss; for, few and feeble as they are, they can ill afford to lose one so intelligent and so true. But they feel, that though no longer present with them in the flesh, she will still be a co-labor with them in the great and good causes in which they have so long been associated.

5-23-52

GANDHI'S READING OF THOREAU, by S.A. POWER

It is possible to quantify Gandhi's reading of Thoreau, as well as to assess what influence Thoreau's writings had on Gandhi's perception of the nonhuman environment. Gandhi, more than is generally realised, drew inspiration, solace and hope from Nature, and scattered in his speeches and writings are his statements on his feelings for nature. (cf. Chatterjee, 1983, 62-6)

Gandhi's first encounter with Thoreau was probably the quote from "Walden" at the beginning of Salt's "A Plea for Vegetarianism" (1886, 6) which he bought soon after his arrival in London in 1888. (CWMG, XXXIX,45: Autobiography, Pt.I.14; also Hunt, 1978, 21)

> "I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals, as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other, when they came in contact with the more civilised." (from 'Walden', 216)

In a letter to Henry Salt in 1929, over 20 years after the events it describes, Gandhi wrote that his first introduction to Thoreau's writings was to the essay 'Civil Disobedience', followed by Salt's biography, "Walden" and other short essays. (CWMG,XLI,553) From explicit references in Gandhi's writings we know that the "other short essays" included 'Life without Principle' and 'Walking'.

'Life without Principle' is listed in the bibliography for "Hind Swaraj", written in 1909. (CWMH,X,65: Hind Swaraj, 105)

'Walking' is first referred to in a Gujarati article on the benefits of exercise, published in Indian Opinion in 1913. (CWMG,XII,24; also XIII,270; LIX,69; LXIII,94)

Gandhi mentions reading "the essays of the great Thoreau" during his second spell in prison (October 7 to December 12, 1908). (CWMG,IX, 181-2) This was possibly the Scott Library edition of Thoreau's essays that Henry Polak remembered in a 1931 interview. (quoted in Hendrick,1956,463) It may even have come from the Volksrust Gaol library (see CWMG,VIII,159) and been among the "basket of books" which Gandhi was carrying when Polak met him off the Natal train on 25th October. (affidavit dated November 30, 1908: CWMG,IX,561) Certainly Gandhi did not have the book of essays with him in 1934 when he misattributed 'Walking' to "Walden . (CWMG,LIX,69)

From his references to 'Walking' it would seem that he only read the first part of the essay. (Essays, 8 to line 24; Excursions, 175 to line 9) His 1913 article extolling the virtues of walking as the form of exercise seems to be quoting from this section. (cf. Salt, 1896,98)

e.g.Thoreau: "....I cannot preserve my health and spirits unless I spend four hours a day at least- and it is commonly more than that-sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields.... (Essays,3, Excursions,164)

When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us if we walked only in a garden or a mall?" (Essays,5; Excursions, 168)

Gandhi: "He [Thoreau] thought nothing of walking four or five hours at a stretch. ....One should not take walks always in the same place or in narrow lanes, but go out into fields and groves. We will then appreciate in some measure the beauty of Nature." (CWMG,XII,24-5)

It is odd that Gandhi should have concentrated solely on this one aspect of 'Walking'. From childhood he enjoyed taking long walks per se, not just for exercise or for reasons of economy. (Pyarelal,1965,196-7,252; CWMG,XII,22-5)

Gandhi believed that the human body is the universe in minature - the universe within reflecting that without- and that sickness was a breach of the laws of Nature. (CWMG,LXXVII,2; XXV,58; LXVI,343; XI,434; XII,166) He saw an intimate connection between his perception of Nature, theories of health and vegetarianism (e.g. see the articles that go to make up "A Guide to Health" in CWMG,XI and XII).

Gandhi, like Thoreau, believed that the way to health was through chastity, self-restraint and dietary reform, avoiding rich stimulating food and drink (Walden, 216-20; CWMG, XII, 45-52; LXXVII,19-25; also Armstrong, 1983) -"in order to achieve real health we must conquer the palate." (CWMG,XII,166; XXXIX,255-7: Autobiography,Pt.IV.27) When Gandhi, with his friend Kallenbach, gave up drinking cow's milk in 1912, this was in part a protest at the treatment of cows and buffaloes in milk production (CWMG,XXIX,206), but also because he had come to believe that milk stimulated the

passions. (CWMG,XXXIX,262-3; Autobiography, Pt.IV.30)

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6-24-52

SESQUICENTENNIAL: THOREAU AND MOUNT WASHINGTON by J. Parker Huber

Three of us--Dana Brigham of West Newton, Mass., and Doug Hobbs of Hampstead, N.H., and I--climbed Mt. Washington, Sunday, Sept. 10, 1989, in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Thoreau's first ascent.

This was the acme of his Concord and Merrimack rivers voyage with brother John, which some forty of us had retraced by canoe in July under the leadership of Robert Madison of Annapolis, Md. Bob was coming to join us when his truck expired on the New Jersey turnpike, forcing him to return.

Thoreau walked along Crawford Path from Crawford Notch over the Southern Presidentials to Mt. Washington and back in one day, a total of 16.4 miles. He was 22. We in our forties required ten hours to do the same thing, plus a forty-five minute pause on top.

Unfortunately Thoreau tells us nothing about his first Mt. Washington experience. He rectifies this lacuna when he returned, July 7-12, 1858. His published JOURNAL account runs twenty-four pages and gives us, according to botanist Ray Angelo, "the most detailed list of plants by zones that had ever been made for this site, one not to be surpassed until the twentieth century," in two additional JOURNAL pages.

This September 10th is hot, humid, hazy. Summit temperatures range from 54 degrees to 62. The lowlands are almost tropical. 90 in Lancaster, N.H., and 92 in North Conway.

Already the alpine landscape is autumnal. Warm amber light enhances everything. Golden heart-leaves of paper birches dance down Oakes Gulf with evergreens. Crimsons and scarlets of alpine bearberry, three-toothed cinquefoil and mountain avens mix with luxuriant low-growing black spruces and Labrador tea. Mountain cranberries taste their best. Tawny sedges, deer's hair, their lower stems still green, blow in the wind that sails clouds through the summit. I dissolve into meditation aside Mt. Franklin. I am infused with the holiness of these plants. Thoreau must have been deeply affected by this sacred space. I give thanks.

7-8-52

[This and other drawings in current bulletins are taken from Thoreau's Journal (Boston, 1906). If you are curious as to what they portray, check the journal entries for the dates given.--WH]

1-25-53

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1-21-53

DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ON THOREAU
(Available from University Microfilms)

AN UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS ORDER NUMBER ADG83-15904. 0000.
AU MARTIN-CAROLYN-LEIGH.
IN UNIVERSITY OF DENVER (0061) PH.D. 1983, 283 PAGES.
TI THOREAU'S "WEEK": THE INFLUENCE OF GOETHE'S "ITALIENISCHE REISE" (MASSACHUSETTS; GERMANY).
SO DAI V44(03), SECA, PP754.
AB This study's main purpose is to show how Thoreau adapts Goethe's Italienische Reise as the structure for A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. The point I argue is that Thoreau understood Goethe's 1786-88 journey through Italy as a personal process of rebirth, and that Thoreau employed it to organize his 1839 journey into book recounting a similar rebirth process. While Thoreau says that he experiences the moment of his "natal hour," Goethe says that he is "reborn." These examples typlify the important changes occurring for both writers during their respective journeys whereby each came to accept, affirm, and dedicate their lives to their work. I show throughout that not only is Thoreau's account of his inner change similar to Goethe's, but his structuring of his rebirth in A Week also corresponds to Goethe's work.

My method has been first to analyze Thoreau's acquaintance with Goethe and his Italian travels, then to examine the evidence for choosing the work as a model, then turn to Thoreau's reasons and subsequent decisions for selecting Goethe's journey, and finally to evaluate in detail Thoreau's utilization of Goethe's structure for his rebirth in A Week. Since there has been no major work written on Thoreau's use of Goethe's journey, I respond primarily to those who have sought to explain Thoreau's journey as a spiritual quest or as an organic symbol, but who have not concentrated solely on Goethean influences.

The work attempts to prove that Thoreau did not create A Week in a vacuum; rather he chose to work within the confines of what he calls the "old forms" of literature and selected Goethe as one of his predecessors. In this action, Thoreau shows that he follows the ancient tradition of writers whose recordings of those "forms" have stemmed from their association with and understanding of nature. These two famous writers' affirmation of rebirth confirms the fact that their experience in this process allows them to achieve necessary detachment from time, space and individual personality. In so doing, they verify the attainability of the universal perspective used by classical writers.

AN UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS ORDER NUMBER ADG82-22860. 0000.
AU HOAG-RONALD-WESLEY.
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL (0153) PH.D. 1982, 241 PAGES.
TI THOREAU AND NATURE: THE WHOLE CIRCLE OF EXPERIENCE.
SO DAI V43(05), SECA, PP1544.
AB Because Henry Thoreau viewed physicality and spirituality as halves of the circle of natural experience, they are opposites without being contradictions. Also, although he pursued tangents to extra-vagant extremes, Thoreau did not transgress that circle's boundaries. In his estimation, the most intense physicality is the wild, whereas perfect spirituality constitutes the sublime. Many seeming contradictions in his life and writings are reconciled by a transcendental equation that makes the poles of wildness and sublimity correspond.

Chapter one, "Thoreau as Centaur," surveys the various thrusts of Thoreau's involvement with nature, establishing the proportion of each in his life and works. While a balanced engagement with the physical and spiritual was his philosophical optimum, he was at heart a primitive whose deepest need was for wildness. "Nature," the second chapter, examines the imaginative-intuitive procedure that he formulated for communing transcendentally with physical and spiritual nature. He employed this two-part method not to leave the world behind and merge with spirit, as commentators have suggested, but rather to discover the laws of nature so that he might live in harmony with them. In the writings he attempted to translate these laws for the benefit of his readers.

In chapter three, "The Mark on the Wilderness: Thoreau's Contact with Ktaadn," an analysis of The Maine Woods demonstrates that scholars have mistakenly identified wild nature as Thoreau's intended "true source of evil." Instead, it is mankind--loggers, settlers, hunters, and even Thoreau himself--that imports defiling evil into the wilderness. Chapter four, "Transcendental Water," assesses the importance to Thoreau of water as the most spiritually expressive form of physical nature to which humanity can relate. The final chapter of this study, "Walton at Walden: Fishing with Thoreau," examines fishing as his representative transcendental activity--one that allows him either to experience physical and spiritual nature simultaneously or to indulge his penchant for wildness. The considerable influence of Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler on both A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers and Walden is also measured here.

1-14-53

NOTES AND QUERIES . . .

Marcia Moss, our archivist, writes that she recently received a phone call from Austra lia from a lady who had seen the movie "Dead Poets Society" and wanted to know the source of the Thoreau quotations therein. She also

received a request for a picture of Thoreau to be used in a Tolstoy exhibition in Moscow to emphasize Thoreau's influence on Tolstoy.

Edmund Schofield announces that a six-day Walden Earthcare Congress will be held from April 16 to 22, 1990, in the towns of Lincoln and Concord. In plenary sessions, panel discussions, debates, and workshops, noted speakers from around the world will address Congress "delegates" from this country and abroad on the full spectrum of current environmental problems. Delegates will examine the problems so identified from a "Thoreauvian" perspective and will draft a "Walden Declaration on the Environment," which will be promulgated on Earth Day 1990. Also, on April 21st (John Muir"s birthday) the first "Thoreau-Muir Wilderness Prize" will be conferred upon the individual or organization that has done the most outstanding work in wilderness conservation over the past few years. For further information, contact Walden Earthcare Congress, Suite 1, Colonial Inn, 48 Monument Square, Concord 01742-1899, telephone 508-369-4252; FAX 508-369-2170.

For those secondary school teachers interested in Thoreau, the National Endowment for the Humanities announces that it will conduct a five-week seminar on "Nature and Society in American Transcendentalism" from June 25 to July 27, 1990, under the direction of Prof. David Robinson. Fellowships of $2375 will be available. For further details, write Prof. Robinson at the Department of English, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331-5302.

As usual, the Thoreau Society will conduct sessions at the annual Modern Language Association convention at the Wilmington Room of the Hotel Sheraton in Washington, D.C., on December 28 from 3:30 to 4:45 pm. Lawrence Buell will speak on "The Debate over Thoreau's Scientific Credentials"; Elizabeth Witherell, on "Assessing the Scope of Thoreau's Broken Task: The Collection and Arrangement of Data in His Phenological Tables"; and Alicia Nitecki, on "Fasting and Feasting: The Quest for Nature in Thoreau, Burroughs and Muir." Sessions are open only to MLA members. The sessions are chaired by Michael Meyer and Joel Myerson.

Richard Conarroe (238 Autumn Ridge Rd., Fairfield, Conn 06432) has recently been presenting a one-person, two-act play, "Chanticleer of Concord. It was reviewed in the August 4, 1989 FAIRFIELD CITIZEN NEWS.

The Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance is sponsoring a session at the New England Environmental Conference on March 16-18, 1990 on protecting sites significantly associated with the life and writings of Thoreau. For details write TCCA, 100 Barrett's Mill Road, Concord, MA 01742.

The Boston office (20 Park Plaza, Suite 536, Boston 02116) of the Wilderness Society has just issued a 48-page book, A NEW MAINE WOODS RESERVE: OPTIONS FOR PROTECTING MAINE'S NORTHERN WILDLANDS with proposals for saving Thoreau's favorite areas.

The controversy over protecting Walden Woods continues to generate much publicity. There have been articles in the CONCORD JOURNAL for July 20 (Town takes no position on proposing Walden as a National Historic Landmark), July 27, August 3, Aug. 24 (Selectmen find office park's environmental report inadequate), Sept. 14, Sept. 21 (Selectmen appoint committee to study designation of Walden Woods as an historic landmark); MINUTEMAN CHRONICLE, Aug. 31; BUFFALO NEWS, July 7; ACTON DIGEST, Fall, 1989.

Collector's Corner: Goodspeed's Book Shop (7 Beacon St., Boston 02108) has for sale a page of the WALDEN manuscript. AMERICAN BOOK PRICES CURRENT for 1988 reports these sale prices: CAPE COD 1st, $200; WALDEN ist with ms, $2000; WEEK ist, $700; Manuscript Edition, $2750, $750; and Thoreau's copy of Burt and Hubbard's REPORT ON THE GEOLOGY OF THE SOUTH SHORE OF LAKE SUPERIOR (Detroit, 1846), $1000. THE PRICE GUIDE TO AUTOGRAPHS, by George Sanders, et al (Radnor, Pa.: Wallace, 1988) cites these as typical prices now for Thoreau manuscripts: signature only, $300; signed document, $750; and a handwritten letter signed, $2250.

Henry Parker Fellows, in BOATING TRIPS ON NEW ENGLAND RIVERS (Boston, 1884, p. 44) speaks of a man named Bull from Concord spending an entire winter in a shanty on the banks of the Concord River "after the manner of Thoreau." He describes the shanty as "entirely of boards, about ten by eight, and just high enough to stand in, with one small window, and a door, and a hole for a stovepipe, and a sand floor." Can anyone tell us anything further about this early Concord imitator of Thoreau? Fellows reports that by 1884 Bull's cabin was completely abandoned and had a leaky roof.

American critic James Gibbons Huneker, in STEEPLEJACK (New York: Scribner, 1918, I, 197) says, "When Walden and A Walk to Wachusetts fell into my hands, I realised that in David Thoreau a true American is incarnated...And the prose of Thoreau, What an artist!...The incisive sentences, the swift-moving paragraphs, the nutty Yankee flavour are singularly convincing. A mystic, he writes...with the precision, the concision, and the light, dark from excess of brilliance."

Pins with a photograph of Thoreau and labeled "Don't pay war taxes" are being circulated currently on the West Coast.

The Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance is now selling "Save Walden Woods" sweatshirts.

We are indebted to the following for information sent in for use in this bulletin: J.Afflito,C.Adams,W.Pottorff,C.Burley,P.Cantamessa,R.Conarroe,J.Dawson,M. Delizia,M.Fenn,L.Files,J.Flanigan,R.Galvin,E.Johnson,K.Kasegawa,A.LaBastille,D. McKinley,M.Meyer,J.Meyerson,J.Moldenhauer, W.Mott,R.O'Connor,J.Oremland,V.Rabe,G. Ryan,E.Schofield,S.Voilker,D.Williams,P. Williams,F.Yoos and S.Yoos. Please keep your secretary informed of items he has missed and new items as they appear.